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The Influence of Horace
In the Seventeenth Century

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THE INFLUENCE OF HORACE IN THE SEVENTEENTH
CENTURY

BY

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THESIS

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Hazel Mary Eliza Mitchell

ENTITLED The Influence of Horace in the Seventeenth
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BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

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Chapter I.

Life of Horace.

Of how many men can it be said that they would have made "their destiny their choice"? We know some great men have said it and Quintus Horatius Flaccus was one of them. His was not a noble birth, for he was cradled in "the huts where poor men lie"; but as far as being ashamed of it was concerned, it was the last thought that ever entered his mind. After he had become the intimate associate of the first men of Rome - the favorite of the Emperor and the companion of Maecenas - he took pains on more than one occasion to call attention to the fact of his humble birth, and to let it be known that had he to begin life anew, he would not have it otherwise.

*"At the time of the birth of Horace, the freedmen were rapidly rising in wealth, and therefore in position". The Roman constitution excluded the senatorial order from commercial pursuits, and would not even permit them to own vessels of any considerable burden, lest they should be made use of in trade. The law itself was not more exclusive than the old Roman feeling. There were certain trades in which not only none who had any pretensions to the rank of a gentleman, but even no one who was free-born could engage without degradation. The Romans did not comprehend the dignity of labor, devoted as they were to the duties of public life either as soldiers or citizens. 'High-minded and unselfish as it may appear to think meanly of employments undertaken simply for the sake of



profit and lucre, the political result of this pride was unmixed evil.' As a result of this commerce was thrown into the hands of those whose fathers had been slaves, and who themselves inherited and possessed the usual vices of a slavish disposition.

"The middle classes were impoverished, and, as the unavoidable consequence of a system in which social position depended upon property, were rapidly sinking into the lowest ranks of the population. Here then was a gap to be filled up - the question was by what means? Had Roman feeling permitted the free-born citizen to devote his energies to labor and the creation of capital, he would have risen in the social scale, would have occupied the place left vacant, and would have brought with him those sentiments of chivalrous freedom which there can be no doubt distinguished Rome in earlier times, and advanced her in the scale of the nation. Thus the circulation would have been complete and healthy, and the national system would have received fresh life and vigor in its most important part. Instead of this, however, slaves and the sons of slaves rose to wealth: not such slaves as those who, well educated and occupying a high or, at least, a respectable position in the conquered Greek states, were appreciated by their conquerors, became their friends and intimates, because of their worth and intellectual acquirements, imbued their masters with their own refinement and taste, and were entrusted with the education of their children, but slaves who had formed the masses of degraded nations. These were driven in hordes to Rome. They swarmed in all the states of Italy and Sicily. Many of them were not deficient in ability and energy, and therefore they arose: but they had little or no moral principle. Their children inter-married with the lower classes of the citizens: their blood

infected that of the higher European races which flowed in their veins: and thus the masses of Rome became a mixed race, but not mixed for the better. The character changed: but it changed because the old race had perished and a new race with new characteristics occupied its place."

'Twas under these circumstances then, that the freedmen became such a powerful class, made up of bankers, merchants and tradesmen of Rome, and the father of Horace was one of the most respectable of this class. His business was to collect the money from purchasers of goods at public auctions. He was a man of strict integrity, content with his position, and would not have thought himself disgraced if his son had followed his own calling.

*"No dread had he, that men might taunt and jeer,

Should I, some future day, as auctioneer,

Or, like himself, as tax-collector seek

With petty vails my humble means to eke."

Horace's father had made a small fortune by his industry, sufficient to purchase an estate near Venusia on the confines of Lucania and Apulia, but not sufficient to free him from the appellation of "a poor man". At this little farm on December 8th, 65 B. C. Horace was born and passed his infant years and played and wandered in that picturesque neighborhood. This region of mountain, forest and river, # "meet nurse of a poetic child" impressed itself indelibly on his memory and filled him with a love of nature, especially in her rugged aspects, which remained with him thru life. Altho' he left this place at an early age and seems never to have visited it again, when he has occasion to describe its features, he does so

*Satire.- I, 6. Translated by Sir Theodore Martin.

#Works of Horace.- Vol. I, Ch. I, Pg. 15.- Sir Theo. Martin.

with a sharpness and truth of touch which show how closely he had even then begun to observe.

*"Hark! Or is this but frenzy's pleasing dream?

Thru groves I seem to stray
Of consecrated bay,
Where voices mingle with the babbling stream,
And whispering breezes play.

When from my nurse erewhile on Vultur's steep
I strayed beyond the bound
Of our small homestead's ground,
Was I, fatigued with play, beneath a heap
Of fresh leaves sleeping found,

Strewn by the storied doves: and wonder fell
On all, their nest who keep
On Acherontia's steep,
Or in Forentum's low rich pastures dwell,
Or Bantine woodlands deep."

When Horace was twelve years old he was taken to Rome and placed under the instruction of Orbilius Pupillus, who was a celebrated schoolmaster. With him Horace read in his own language the poems of Livius Andronicus and Annius: and in the Greek, the Iliad of Homer, whose divine poetry he soon learned to enjoy.

While Horace was in Rome, he was enabled, by the liberality of his father, to so dress and have such a retinue of slaves, that he was on terms of equality with boys far above him in rank and station. All this time his father kept him under his own roof and

*Ode.- III, 4. Translated by Sir Theo. Martin.

thus secured for him the benefits of home influences, sage and prudent advice, and the watchful care of the parental eye. "The practical nature of this indulgent and devoted father's instruction - how he delighted to teach by example rather than by precept - is simply told by Horace [#]himself in one of his satires."

Since Horace never mentions his father only in connection with his boyhood days, it is safe to assume that the kindly parent died before the boy arrived at manhood's estate. As Browne suggests, this may be the reason why, in his earlier poetry, his genial freedom so often degenerated into licentiousness, and his love of pleasure tempted him to adopt the dissolute manners of a corrupt age. His moral sense was accurate and just, - he could see what was useful and approve it: he could censure the vices of his contemporaries - but he had lost that wise counsel which had hitherto preserved him pure.

Athens was at that time the "University of Rome", and 'twas there that Horace went

**"To seek for truth in Academic groves."

He commenced his residence there at a great political crisis and the Roman politics created a vivid interest in the young students at Athens. He had not lived there long, when Julius Caesar was assassinated: and many of his fellow students zealously embraced the republican party. He himself was twenty-two years of age, and, joining the army of Brutus, served under him until the battle of Philippi, in the rank of a military tribune. He evidently had be-

*Roman Literature.- Ch. 5, Pg. 270 - Browne.

#Satire.- I, 6.

**Epistle.- II, 2.

come distinguished, since nothing but merit could have recommended the son of a freed man to Brutus for so high a military command. But the event proved that he had sadly mistaken his vocation, for he was totally unfit for the position either of an officer or a soldier.

When he returned to Rome he found that his father was dead and his patrimony confiscated. For a time things looked dark, but soon his fortunes began to brighten. Previous to this he had met Virgil and Varius and the three were warm friends and it was thru Virgil and Varius that Horace met Maecenas - and was enrolled in the number of his friends. The friendship of these two was beautiful, uninterrupted and affectionate. 'As Maecenas rose in influence and favor with Augustus, he also procured the advancement of his friend.

*"At this period of his life he commenced the composition of his first book of Satires. The knowledge of human life which he had begun to acquire when he lived, as it were, upon the town, and became acquainted with the manners, habits and modes of thinking of the masses, was afterwards cultivated, refined, and matured by intercourse with the best literary society. His observant mind found ample materials for satire at the table of the courtly Maecenas, and amidst the brilliant circle by which he was surrounded."

When Maecenas gave Horace the Sabine farm, he made him happy for life. While it was only a slight gift for the former to bestow, it was to Horace, on account of his fondness for the country, a gift beyond all price. It more than supplied all his needs - it #gave him leisure, health, amusement, and "more precious than all, it

*Roman Classical Literature.- Browne - Ch. 5.

#Works of Horace.- Martin - Ch. 3, Pg. 73.

secured him undisturbed freedom of thought, and opportunities for that calm intercourse with nature which he "needed for his spirit's health." Never was gift better bestowed, or more worthily requited. To it we are indebted for much of the poetry which has linked the name of Maecenas with that of the poet in associations the most engaging, and has afforded, and will afford, ever-new delight to successive generations.

The remainder of his life was given up to writings which I shall touch upon later. He was never married - he was too general an admirer, and his tastes and habits were too much those of a bachelor to appreciate the happiness of a wedded life.

Horace was afraid of death and he never spoke of it only in terms of sadness. When Maecenas died life became for him exceedingly dreary. Seventeen years before he had written to Maecenas:

"Think not that I have sworn a bootless oath;

Yes, we shall go, shall go,

Hand linked in hand, where'ere thou leadest, both

The last sad road below."

The lines must have rung in the poet's ears like a sad refrain.

"The Digentia lost its charm: he could not see its crystal waters for the shadows of Charon's rueful stream." The prattle of his beloved Bandusian spring could not wean his thoughts from the vision of his other self wandering ^{un}accompanied along that "last sad road." We may fancy that Horace was thenceforth little seen in his accustomed haunts. He who so often soothed the sorrows of other bereaved hearts, answered with a wistful smile to the friendly consolations of the many that loved him. "His work was done. It was time to go away. Not all the skill of Orpheus could recall him whom he had

lost. The welcome end came sharply and suddenly: and one day, when the bleak November wind was whirling down the oak-leaves on his well-beloved brook, the servants of his Sabine farm learned that they should no more see the good, cheery master, whose pleasant smile and kindly word had so often made their labors light. There was many a sad heart, too, in Rome, when the wit who never wounded, the poet who ever charmed, the friend who never failed, was laid in a corner of the Esquiline, close to the tomb of his "dear knight Maecenas." He died on the twenty-seventh of November, B. C. 8, the kindly, lonely man leaving to Augustus what little he possessed. One would fain trust his own words were inscribed upon his tomb, as in the supreme hour the faith they expressed was of a surety strong within his heart,-

*"Non omnis moriar."

*Works of Horace.- Martin- Ch. 3, Pg. 181.



Chapter II.

General Characteristics of Augustan Age.*

The Augustan age - a period of some fifty-seven years - comprises a number of writers, inferior to those of the Ciceronian age in vigor and boldness, but who, in finish and artistic skill as well as in breadth of human understanding and sympathy and suggestive beauty of expression, are superior to everyone but Cicero himself. "It marks the culmination of Latin poetry, as the last epoch marks the perfection of Latin prose. But the bloom which had been so long expanding was short-lived in proportion to its sweetness; and perfect as is the art of Virgil, Horace, and Tibullus, within a few years of Horace's death both style and thought had entered on the path of irretrievable decline. The muse of Ovid, captivating and brilliant, has already lost the severe grace that stamps the highest classic verse; and the false tendencies forgiven in him from admiration for his talent, become painfully conspicuous in his younger contemporaries. Livy, too, in the domain of history, shows traces of that poetical coloring which began more and more to encroach on the style of prose; while in the work of Vitruvius, on the one hand and in that of the elder Seneca on the other, we observe two tendencies which helped to accelerate decay; the one towards an entire absence of literary finish, and the other towards the substitution of rich decoration for chaste ornament."

It is interesting to note some common features shared by the
 *Based on Chapter 2 of Part II in "History of Roman
 Literature." - Cruttwell.

chief Augustan authors which distinguish them from those of the closing Republic. The latter were men of birth and eminence in the state, but the former were mostly Italians or provincials, quite often of humble origin, neither warriors nor statesmen, but peaceful, quiet natures, devoid of ambition, and desiring only a modest independence and success in carrying on their art. Virgil prayed that he might live without glory among the forests and streams which he loved.* Tibullus[#] and Propertius** assert in the strongest terms their incapacity for an active career, praying for nothing more than enjoyment of the pleasures of lore and song. These "gentle and diffident" poets needed a patron to call out their powers or protect their interests; and when in the time of Augustus, such a patron was found, the rich harvest of talent that arose showed how much letters had hitherto suffered from the unsettled state of the times. Cruttwell says that "The lack of patrons becomes a standing apology in later times for the poverty of literary production." The three great authors of Augustus's reign - Virgil, Livy and Horace, who are the true representatives of this period, were brought into direct contact with the emperor and much of their inspiration centers round his office and person.

***Simcox, in his discussion of the "Augustan Age" says that the literature during the reign of Augustus has two distinct characters - "it represents the highest elaboration of form ever attained

*G. II, 486. *Flumina amem silvasque inglorius.*

#I. 57. *Non ego laudari curo mea Delia: tecum Dummi lo sim, queso segnis inersque vocer.*

**El. I, 6, 29. *Non ego sum laudi, non natus idoneus armis.*

***A History of Latin Literature - G.A.Simcox. Vol. I, Part III, Ch.I

in Latin, and the elevation of thought; afterwards there were efforts to surpass it in both directions, which had a short-lived success in the judgment of contemporaries too excitable to distinguish between inspiration and an ambition reckless of good sense and good taste." Plato once said that it was not the musical man, but the unmusical, who tried to do more than the musical had done.

The so-called barrenness of this period is an answer to the theory that the Augustan age, like the age of Louis XIV, only expended the energy which it had inherited from the Republic. When the independence of political life was suppressed, it contributed to the literary movement. Men of letters were no longer depressed by the feeling that the work-a-day world and its numerous natural leaders were practically of much more importance than they were; they saw nothing above them but the narrow circle of the ruler and his intimates, whom it was easy to invest with superhuman attributes. As a result of the events being more important and more certain than the processes by which they came about, it became easier to idealize them, and when idealism had once set in, it was easy to confound projects and achievements. "Wordsworth was a scrupulous realist, but the account of the French Revolutionary War, that we may gather from his poems would be quite as untrustworthy as that which we should gather of the reign of Augustus from the Odes of Horace." It was undoubtedly true that the ascendancy of Augustus was disadvantageous to eloquence in the law-courts; but it is to be remembered that the struggles of the law-courts were a nuisance to everyone but the advocates. The forum, which was hardly large enough for an exchange, was also the natural resort for loungers, and it was not convenient to have it blocked up by noisy and often quarrelsome

disputants, whom it was a point of honor to detain as long as possible.

The form of literature to which most favor was shown was poetry, and it flourished more vigorously than any other. The pastoral and metrical epistle, were introduced now for the first time. The pastoral was based on the Theocritean idyll, and the metrical epistle was of two kinds: first, either a real communication on some subject of mutual interest, or second, an imaginary expression of feeling put into the mouth of a mythical hero or heroine. Horace well illustrates the first and Ovid, the second. Philosophy and science flourished to a considerable extent also. The desire to find some compensation for the loss of outward activity led many to strive after the ideal of conduct presented by stoicism. Nearly all earnest minds were more or less affected by this great system. It is reported that Livy was an eloquent expounder of philosophical doctrines, and in fact, most of the poets showed a strong leaning to its study. Augustus wrote "adhortationes", and doubtless his example was often followed. The speculative and inoffensive topics of natural science were neither encouraged nor neglected by him.

The excellent literary judgment shown by Augustus contributed to encourage a high standard of taste among the rival authors and it is pleasing to observe that there was an entire absence of ill-feeling reigning among the poets. Each one had his own special position to fill, but each and all were welcome at the reunions of Augustus, - equally acceptable to one another - and each criticised the other's work with the freedom of a "literary freemasonry".

Everywhere it is acknowledged that this period of Roman Literature was the brightest. The two causes that made the Latin

language more widely spread than ever before were, first, the settlement of colonies and, second, "the communication of the privilege of citizenship". In spite of all the encouragements which the Romans extended to the literature of Greece, and in spite of all their imitations of its poetry, they did not fail to vindicate the dignity of their own language, and were always most anxious for its extension and sovereignty. For many ages, and while it was merely a spoken language, it had been extremely fluctuating and variable. Before the Augustan age it had received stability from literary composition and from the wonderful care which was taken by great men towards the close of the republic - such men as Caesar, Varro, Cicero and Pompey - to preserve its purity, it had now reached the highest pitch of refinement. "The standard of perfection was fixed - every ancient barbarism was dropped, and every innovation shunned.

Hence, the Latin authors of the Augustan age, are possessed of one excellence not to be found in an equal degree among the writers of any other country, nor among those of their own, by whom they were preceded or followed;- an exquisite skill in the use of language, a happy selection of words, a beautiful structure of periods, and a precision of style, which conveys their sentiments by the straight paths, whether to the heart or understanding. Other writers may have soared with higher flight, and excited in their readers greater admiration or wonder - they may have ventured more fearlessly into unexplored regions, and trod more boldly the brink of error; but it is the peculiar merit of the Augustan authors, that they scarcely ever present us with a loose expression, or superfluous clause; and that they always convey their meaning in the choicest and most appropriate terms. Hence, their lines fix themselves and

dwell on the memory, and their sentences have all the force of maxims.

From the charm cast over it by a few men of exalted genius, the Augustan age has been regarded not only as happy in the purity of language, but as affording an example of every sort of national felicity, as the flourishing period of the Roman state - the second "Golden Age" announced by oracles and poets!*

* History of Roman Literature. - Dunlop. Vol. III, Pg. 542.

Chapter III.

The Direct Influence of Horace.

Dryden, in his "Defence of The Essay of Dramatic Poesy", says that the propositions laid down by him "as helps to the better imitation of nature" are not his "nor were ever pretended so to be, but derived from the authority of Aristotle and Horace". This is not the first time he has turned to the latter for aid, nor is it the first time that we have seen the influence of Horace in his writings. Thruout the writings of the seventeenth century, particularly in the works of Pope, Dryden, Jonson and Spenser also, one can see the effect of Horace's "Satires" and his "Ars Poetica". The latter poem while seemingly intended for the Roman writers of his time only, has been taken by the modern poets as a guide for their own work and before we proceed farther, it perhaps would be profitable to get an understanding of what the poem really is.

¹Bishop Hurd, at one time Lord Bishop of Worcester, says that it is agreed on all hands that the ancients are our masters in the art of composition. "Such of their writings, therefore, as deliver instructions for the exercise of art, must be of the highest value." He considers that the "Ars Poetica" has acquired a credit, in this respect, superior to the rest -- the poem "which the learned have long since considered as a kind of summary of the rules of good writing: to be gotten by heart by every young student: and to whose decisive authority

1. Bishop Hurd's Works. Vol. I. Introduction.

the greatest masters in taste and composition must finally submit."

In general, the subject of this poem is the state of the Roman Drama and Horace wrote it according to a regular, well ordered plan -- a plan which can be divided into three parts.

The first part (from v. 1 to 89) serves as a useful introduction to the poet's design, and opens with ¹"the air of ease and negligence", essential to the epistolary form.

The second part (v. 89 to 295) forms the main part of the epistle -- regulating the Roman stage, giving rules for tragedy, ¹"not only as that was the sublimer species of the Drama, but, as it seems, less cultivated and understood".

The third and last part (v. 295 to the end) exhorts one to correctness in writing and ¹"is taken up partly in removing the causes, that prevented it, and partly in directing to the use of such means, as might serve to promote it".

Briefly, this is the content of the epistle, but in order for one to enter freely into it, he must follow the poet more attentively, "thru the elegant connections of his own method".

First, there is the fundamental precept of preserving unity in the subject and the disposition of the piece. Then there are some general reflections concerning poetical distribution -- and from the general he proceeds to the particulars. The most obvious of these are the different "forms and measures" of poetic composition, and he considers, in this view, the four great species of poetry, to which all others may be reduced --

the "Epic", "Elegiac", "Dramatic" and "Lyric". With Horace there is no difficulty in distinguishing between the measures to be observed in the several species of poetry, but rather how far one may partake of the spirit of the other, and not destroy that "natural and necessary difference", which ought to exist between them all. To explain this, he takes up the case of dramatic poetry -- the two species of which are as distinct from each other as any two can be and "yet there are times when the features of the one will be allowed to resemble those of the other". For example, Comedy, in the passionate parts, will admit of a tragic elevation; and Tragedy, in its soft distressful scenes, condescends to the ease of familiar conversation. But this was not the main view Horace had in choosing this instance, for by this means he leads us to his real subject -- dramatic poetry -- and by a most delicate transition, proceeds to deliver a series of rules, interspersed with historical accounts and enlivened by digressions, for the regulation and improvement of the Roman Stage.

Naturally he considers the properties of the Tragic Style, first and he takes it up according to the "internal state and character" of the speaker, because one sort of expression will become the "angry", another the "sorrowful", another the "gay", still another the "severe" -- and then he takes up the subject according to the outward circumstances of "rank", "age", "office", or "country".

Next he treats of the "characters", which he divides into two classes: (1) "Old ones" and (2) "Invented ones". As to the first, his rule is to "follow fame" and for the second,

the great requisite is "uniformity" or "consistency of representation". Under this head he gives us quite a little discussion concerning imitation, showing how "old characters" and old subjects may be successfully treated, and then he gives the rules relating to the case of the drama. First, he takes up the case of "representation" and "recital", that is, why are some things better fitted to be acted on the stage, others to be related on it. In following out this point, he restrains the use of "machines" and prescribes the number of acts and of persons, to be introduced on the stage at the same time and there he considers the chorus. The chorus had a two-fold purpose -- (1) to sustain the part of the characters in the acts, and (2) to connect the acts with songs, persuading to good morals and suitable to the subject.

Tragedy being, originally, nothing more than a chorus or song set to music, from which the harmony of the regular chorus in after times had its rise, he takes occasion to digress "in explaining the simplicity and barbarity of the old and the refinements of the later music. After this he takes up the subject of the "Roman satiric piece", explaining the use and end of the satires. In discussing the satires, he gives us an exact description of this sort of poem, instructing us in the due temperature and decorum of the satiric style. Lastly, he gives advice as to the choice of proper subjects and ¹"defines the just character of those principal and so uncommon personages in this drama, the satyrs themselves. This being premised, he considers what belongs in common to this with the regular tragedy,

the laws and use of the iambic foot: reproving at the same time, the indolence or ill-taste of the Roman writers in this respect, and sending them for instruction to the Grecian models."

Coming now to the third and last division of the poem -- that division which has been the most influential perhaps, we hear him urging "care and diligence in writing". He asserts, first of all, that wisdom and good sense are the sources and principles of good writing. For one to obtain these he advises (1) "a careful study of the Socratic, that is, moral wisdom" and (2) "a thorough acquaintance with human nature, 'that great exemplar of manners', as he calls it, or in other words, a wide extensive view of real, practical life." A combination of these two, as a means of acquiring a moral knowledge, was perfectly necessary, because the former, by itself, is apt to grow abstracted and unaffecting and the latter, uninteresting and superficial.

Another impediment to success in poetry is the inattention to the entire scope and purpose of it. Poetry has a double design, to "instruct" and "please" and the full aim and glory of the art cannot be attained without uniting them both.

He strongly inforces his first rule -- that of diligence in writing by shewing, to quote from Bishop Hurd, that a "mediocrity", however tolerable, or even commendable, it might be in other arts, would never be allowed in this, for which he assigns this very obvious and just reason -- that, as the main end of poetry is to please, if it did not reach that point (which it could not do by stopping ever so little on this side

of excellence) it was, like indifferent music, indifferent perfumes, or any other indifferent thing, which we can do without, and whose end should be to please, "offensive and disagreeable", and for want of being very good, absolutely and insufferably bad. This reflexion leads him to the general conclusion that as none but excellent poetry will be allowed, it should be a warning to writers, how they engage in it without abilities or publish without severe and frequent correction".

But one thing is still wanting. Altho the poet may be excellently formed by nature and accomplished by art, will his own judgment be a sufficient guide, without assistance from others? "Will not the partiality of an author for his own works sometimes prevail over the united force of rules and genius, unless he call in a fairer and less interested guide? Doubtless it will: and therefore the poet, with the utmost propriety, adds as a necessary part of this instructive monition to his brother poets, some directions concerning the choice of a prudent and sincere friend, whose unbiased sense might at all times correct the prejudices, indiscretions and oversights of the author. And to impress this necessary care, with greater force, on the poet, he closes the whole with showing the dreadful consequences of being imposed upon in so nice an affair: representing, in all the strength of coloring, the picture of a bad poet, infatuated to a degree of madness, by a fond conceit of his own works, and exposed thereby (so important had been the service of timely advice) to the contempt and scorn of the public."¹

1. Hurd I.

Could such a work fail to leave its impress? To the writers of the seventeenth century Horace is almost indispensable and we find the most famous satirists reflecting his influence not only in spirit but in form. Poets look to him for guidance and critics rest the proof of their criticisms in him. It was Pope who wrote:

"Horace still charms with graceful negligence,
And without method talks us into sense,
Will, like a friend, familiarly convey
The truest notions in the easiest way.
He who, supreme in judgment as in wit,
Might boldly censure, as he boldly writ,
Yet judg'd with coolness, tho' he sang with fire;
His Precepts teach but what his works inspire."¹

And it was Pope also who was one of his most successful imitators. In the "Essay on Criticism" Horace's influence is strongly felt. He laid down, as it were, the rules for poetry and Pope accepts them without question. It is interesting to note how closely he resembles him even in the poetry itself. As an example compare the two following quotations -- the first from Horace and the second from Pope:

2 "All ye who labor in the Muses' bowers,
Select a theme proportioned to your powers
And ponder long, and with the nicest care
How much your shoulders can and cannot bear."

1. Essay on Criticism. Pope. Lines 653-660.

2. "Ars Poetica", Lines 61-64.

- 1 "But you who seek to give and merit fame,
 And justly bear a critic's noble name,
 Be sure yourself and your own reach to know,
 How far your genius, taste and learning go."

In his satires, Pope was a professed follower of Horace. He acknowledged that he was indebted to him for his satirical forms -- "to the divine little man of the world who lived in the Sabine farm." But as Pattison has said "Our pleasure indeed is enhanced and our admiration of the poetic skill raised, where we compare them with Horace's and note the ingenuity with which the English analogue is substituted in every instance for the Roman original."² Two illustrations will perhaps suffice to show what Pattison means. First note what Horace says in regard to Roman genius:

"It might have shone, but that it values not,
 Nay, holds in very scorn, the art to blot."³

In his imitation of this epistle, Pope says,

"Even copious Dryden wanted, or forgot,
 The best and greatest art, the art to blot."

Julius Florus says:

"But now when blest with all I want, what wealth
 Of hellebore could purge my brain to health,
 Were I not better pleased to dream and drowse,
 Than with concocting verse to rack my brows?"

1. "Essay on Criticism". Lines 46-49.
2. "Satire and Satirists". James Hannay.
3. Epistle to Augustus, Book II: 1.

So Pope:

"But (thanks to Homer) since I live and thrive,
Indebted to no prince or peer alive,
Sure I should want the care of ten Monroes,
If I would scribble, rather than repose."

In the same epistle, Horace writes:

"In empty Athens, where a man who's spent
Seven years in study, o'er great authors bent,
More stock-dumb than a statue, wanders out,
As such men will, the crowd with laughter shout."

Pope paraphrases it thus:

"The man who, stretched in Isis' calm retreat,
To books and study gives seven years complete,
See, strewn with dust, his learned night cap on,
He walks an object new beneath the sun!
The boys flock round him, and the people stare:
So stiff, so mute! Some statue, you would swear,
Stept from its pedestal to take the air."

As we read these passages over and many more similar ones, we see how greatly indebted Pope was to Horace, and we may wonder what Pope would have done if there had been no Horace. He had much in common with Horace -- moral insight of the same kind -- similar mastery over a subtle gaiety of ridicule (because of which likeness he has imitated him so well), but he was more bitter by nature and temper and makes wounds that do not heal. Horace was in happier circumstances -- under the kindly protection of a great emperor, -- and a great emperor's favorite, living in a lovelier climate, and was altogether an

easier, more playful, more essentially humorous man -- and a more healthy man.

Leaving England and her writers for a moment, let us go over into France and get acquainted with Boileau -- a seventeenth century writer who shows to a great extent the influence of our Latin poet. In an epitaph which he wrote for himself he said that he was "original even in imitation" and that he had striven to unite in himself "Horace, Perseus and Juvenal". He was one of the greatest of modern satirists, and the very nature of his satire is exactly like that of Horace -- it laughs at what is offensive to its taste and its largely developed organ of common sense. Like Pope, he grants that he is an imitator, and in his general satires -- as when he attacks false nobility, "nobility without personal virtue", he takes up the whole view, the actual contrasts and "points" of the Roman satirist. Horace is amusing in his satire and you find yourself laughing heartily with him -- and it is the same with Boileau. His is the same kind of humor -- the same style. Hannay admirably sums him up when he says:¹ "Boileau's amusement as a writer, which everybody who takes up his Satires becomes sensible of, is produced by an appeal to your sense of the ridiculous, as a sensible and polished person. You laugh with him from the same instinct which would make you laugh, if the parson came into the pulpit of your church with his night cap on, and proceeded, with solemn unconsciousness of the fact, to begin the service. In proportion to your social feeling of his extreme respectability would your sense of the contrast

1. "Satire and Satirists". Page 110.

be: and tho you would not show it so much, you would feel it more acutely and vividly than honest Jack Gibbins the gardener, whose immediate sensation would rather be awe, and his reflection, a Lord a' mercy! that the poor gentleman should make such a figure of himself. Boileau, I mean to say, deals most in conventional ridicule. Hence he appeals as an author to the polished classes, and to the more worldly among them: and further, I fear, if he was not satirical, he would be nothing. When he discourses, he is often a bore: and if you view him apart from his exquisite faculty of expression, you admire him less and less. His style is charming: he is clear, lively, and rapier-like in the extreme. His forteto my mind, is epigram: he winds up a run of easy verses with nothing in particular in them, with some sharp turn of thought, which hits the object in the bull's eye and sets the bell ringing. He is a capital man to quote and one of those men who can be judged of from quotations. He is a cutting, but not a bloody satirist: and his blows, sharp, pungent and annoying, have a good deal the effect of a pea-shooter."

Coming back to England we hear Dryden saying:¹ "Horace instructs us how to combat our vices, to regulate our passions, to follow nature, to give bounds to our desires, to distinguish betwixt truth and falsehood, and betwixt our conceptions of things, and things themselves -- to come back from our prejudicate opinions, to understand exactly the principles and motives of all our actions, and to avoid the ridicule into

1. History of Roman Literature -- Dunlop. Vol. 3. "Horace".

which all men necessarily fall, who are intoxicated with those notions which they have received from their masters and which they obstinately retain, without examining whether or not they be founded on right reason. In a word, he labors to render us happy in relation to ourselves, agreeable and faithful to our friends, and discreet, serviceable, and well bred, in relation to those with whom we are obliged to live and to converse."

In Dryden's "Essay on Dramatic Poesy" he refers us constantly to Horace. In speaking of the coining of new words in the drama he impresses upon our minds the fact that "Horace himself was cautious to obtrude a new word on his readers, and makes custom and common use the best measure of receiving it into our writings:

"In choice of words be cautious and select,
Dwell with delight on this, and that reject.
No slight success will be achieved, if you
By skilful setting make old phrases new.
Then, should new terms be wanted to explain
Things that till now in darkness hid have lain,
And you shall coin, now here, now there, a word,
Which our bluff ancestors have never heard,
Due leave and license will not be refused,
If with good taste and sound discretion used.
Nay, such new words, if from a Grecian source,
Aptly applied, are welcomed as of course.
To Vergil and to Varius why forbid
What Plautus erewhile and Caecilius did?

Or why to me begrudge a few words more,
 If I can add them to my scanty score,
 When Cato and old Ennius revelled each
 In coining new words that enriched our speech?
 A word that bears the impress of its day
 As current coin will always find its way."

Pope in his criticism sets forth the same idea that is conveyed in the last two lines, just quoted, when he says:

"Use will father what's begot by sense."

Ben Jonson also felt the force of these lines of Horace for he says: "Custom is the most certain mistress of language, as the public stamp makes the current money. But we must not be too frequent with the mint, every day coining: nor fetch words from the extreme and utmost ages, since the chief virtue of a style is perspicuity and nothing so vicious in it as to need an interpreter. Words borrowed of antiquity do lend a kind of majesty to style, and we are not without their delight sometimes. For they have the authority of years, and out of their intermission do win to themselves a kind of grace-like newness. But the eldest of the present and newest of the past language, is best."¹

The voice of another seventeenth century writer comes in just here and says:

"Words in one language elegantly used
 Will hardly in another be excused,
 And some that Rome admired in Caesar's time

1. Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century --Spingarn. Vol. I.

May neither suit our genius nor our clime."¹

Since the author speaks of Horace as his "master", it is safe to assume that he had the following lines of the latter in mind when he wrote the passage just quoted:

"These and all earthly works, must pass away:

And words, shall they enjoy a longer day?

Some will revive that we no more allow,

And some die out that are in favor now."²

When Dryden is giving his opinion concerning what should be presented upon the stage and what should not, he says: "The good writer, which describe it lively, will make a deeper impression of belief in us than all the actor can insinuate into us, when he seems to fall dead before us, and we are no more weary to hear what becomes of him when not upon the stage, than we are to listen to the news of an absent mistress. But it is objected, that if one part of the play may be related, then why not all? I answer, some parts of the action are more fit to be represented, some to be related. That is, those actions which by reason of their cruelty will cause aversion in us, or by reason of their impossibility, unbelief, ought either wholly to be avoided by a poet, or only delivered by narration." Here again is Horace's influence undoubtedly seen, for he says:

"The events which plays are written to unfold,

Are either shown upon the stage or told.

Most true, whate'er's transmitted thru the ear

1. An Essay on Translated Verse --Earl of Roscommon.

2. Ars Poetica.

To mind and heart will never come so near,
 As what is set before the eyes, and each
 Spectator sees brought full within his reach.
 Yet do not drag upon the stage what might
 Be much more fitly acted out of sight:
 Much, too, there is which 'twill be always well
 To leave the actor's well graced speech to tell.
 Let not Medea kill her boys in view,
 Nor Atreus human flesh in public stew:
 Progne must not be transformed into a snake.
 If things like these before my eyes be thrust,
 I turn away in sceptical disgust."¹

Sir Robert Howard in his "Preface to Four New Plays" refers to the same passage, in his discussion as to why the composition of the ancients, especially in their serious plays, followed the manner which they did: and he writes: "it will be found that the subjects they commonly chose drove them upon the necessity, which were usually the most known stories and fables: accordingly, Seneca making choice of Medea, Hyppolitus and Hercules Oetus, it was impossible to show Medea throwing old, mangled Aeson into her age-renewing caldron, or to present the scattered limbs of Hyppolitus upon the stage, or show Hercules burning upon his own funeral pile. And this the judicious Horace clearly speaks of in his *Ars Poetica*."

Horace had no little share in the forming of the drama -- he was one of the two from whom came the famous Rules -

1. *Ars Poetica*.

"The Three Unities", which ought to be observed in every regular play, namely, Time, Place and Action. It was in connection with his writing of drama, that Ben Jonson was such an ardent follower of Horace and a "learned plagiarist" of all others. You track him everywhere in their snow: if Horace, Lucan, Petronius Arbiter, Seneca and Juvenal had their own from him, there are few serious thoughts which are new in him." Dryden humorously says that he presumes Jonson loved their fashion, when he wore their clothes.

Horace, in discussing the question as to whether the charm of verse is due to "art or inborn genius" says:

"In all fine work, methinks, each plays a part --
 Art linked with genius, genius linked with art;
 Each doth the other's helping hand require,
 And to one end they both, like friends, conspire.
 The youth, who in the foot-race burns to win,
 Must do and suffer much ere he begin, --
 Sweat himself down, bear cold and toil and pain,
 And from the lures of love and wine abstain."

And we find Jonson, in his lines -- "To the memory of my beloved Mr. William Shakespeare, and what he hath left us" -- expressing the same idea and using a similar figure when he writes:

"Yet must I not give to nature all; thy art,
 My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.
 For tho' the poet's matter nature be,
 His art doth give the fashion. And that he,

Who casts to write a living line must sweat,
 (Such as thine are), and strike the second heat
 Upon the 'Muses' anvil; turn the same,
 (And himself with it) that he thinks to frame;
 Or for the laurel he may gain a scorn,
For a good poet's made as well as born."

In criticising Ben Jonson's play of "The Silent Women", Dryden commends heartily the extreme, elaborate and yet easy contrivance of the plot. He says that it is still more to be admired because the play is a comedy -- where the persons are only of common rank, and their business private, not elevated by passions or high concernments, as in serious plays. In such a play everyone is a proper judge of all he sees, nothing is represented but that with which he daily converses: therefore all faults lie open to discovery and few are pardonable. But Jonson was not ignorant of these difficulties and made use of all advantages -- "as he who designs a large leap takes his rise from the highest ground." Dryden's criticism is good, but how can we allow him the originality of his conception when we turn to Horace and find him saying:

"People are wont to fancy, that because
 Her characters from common life she draws,
 'Tis easy to write comedy: but they
 Forget the truth lies all the other way:
 Because the comic writer, if he halts,
 Can count on no indulgence for his faults."

There are other writers of this period who might be mentioned -- Drayton, Hobbes, Fletcher, Habington and Shef-

Horace

That lifts, or calms at will
the restless seas."

Ode 3:2 Book I.

Spenser

That rules the seas, and makes
them rise or fall."

Fairie Queen IV:11:2.

"Or laughing Erycina, round
whose head
Boy Cupid flits and Mirth on
airy wing."

Ode 2:9 Book I.

"And all about her neck and
shoulders flew
A flock of little Loves and
Sports and Joys,
With nimble wings of gold and
purple hue."

Fairie Queen IV:X:42.

So much for Spenser, now let us turn to Milton. By following the same process we can see how Horace has made his way into the heart of the greater poet.

Horace

"What with tomorrow comes for-
bear
To ask."

Ode 9:4 Book. I.

Milton

"What need a man forestall his
day of grief,
And run to meet what he should
most avoid?"

Comus 362.

"Still let her scorn to search
with pain
For gold, the earth hath wise-
ly hid,
Nor strive to wrest with hands
profane

"And with hands profane
Rifled the bowels of their
mother earth
For treasures better hid."
Paradise Lost I:686.

This all might have been coincidence had none of these writers been classical students, but since facts stand as they do, we will have to "give honor to whom honor is due" and agree with those men who said that Horace "was the best master of virtue and wisdom: an excellent and true judge upon cause and reason not because he thought so, but because he knew so out of use and experience":¹ "who was the best law giver to translators":² "whose style was so pure and proper that it could not possibly have been better in Prose"³ and who was such a "mighty master and example".⁴ Dryden says that he gets his propositions from Horace and others, but as we read we cannot help but feel that he leans the more heavily on Horace. And so it is with the other writers of the seventeenth century. But sometimes in their admiration of the great poet, the more modern writers allow their feelings to run away with them and they write things, following Horace, which are not true to their own times. Particularly is this seen in the poetry concerning country life. Horace was an ardent admirer of the country and his love for rural life slips into his poetry frequently, but the farm life of the seventeenth century was changed to a marked degree from that on and near the "Sabine Farm". And when we hear our poets exclaiming, as they often do, "Too happy (husbandmen) if their happiness they knew", it is not strange

1. Ben Jonson.
2. George Chapman.
3. Edward Philips.
4. John Sheffield.

that John Wesley wonders if "the servile herd of the imitators" of Horace have lost their senses. "For", he says, "Our eyes and ears may convince us there is not a less happy body of men in all England than the country farmers. In general their life is supremely dull: and it is usually unhappy too. For of all people in the kingdom they are the most discontented, seldom satisfied either with God or man".¹ But so closely has Horace entwined himself into the thoughts of seventeenth century writers, that unconsciously they assume his attitude toward all subjects. His ideas permeate all their works and he will always live as a teacher of the world.

To convey to you as nearly as possible some image of Horace, let me quote once more from Hannay: "Take sense like Franklin's only with an air of higher breeding; mild and thin flowing humor like Addison's, minus the Christianity: abundant quantities of Chesterfieldan shrewdness and wit, with gaiety like Lady Wortley Montagu's: and a fair dose of Campbell's poetic spirit, and Washington Irving's poetic taste, -- and you perhaps have something that gives you a glimpse of Horace" -- the poet whose voice was so sweet and of such power that seventeen centuries have not sufficed to drown its melody or check its force.

1. John Wesley's Journal - Vol. II. Page 243.

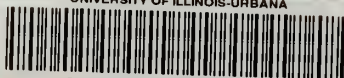
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